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Work / Life

Recipes
for Stress
by Charlie Badenhop

NAVIGATOR

It is within your power to reduce the stressful reactions that you have. A key to changing your reactions is being able to track the way in which you generate stress.

Recently, a coaching colleague told me a story about his client “Jim” who gets into many arguments and confrontations with others. After each altercation Jim spends a good deal of time attempting to convince my coaching colleague as to how the other person’s behavior was the catalyst for what took place. One of his favorite expressions is “I hate it when people jump to conclusions without first getting all of the facts.” In return my colleague has spent a good deal of time trying to show Jim how his behavior and thinking play a key role in creating his many problems.

Recently, Jim asked my colleague to accompany him on a business trip. On the second day of their trip they were walking down the street together late at night, having just finished a marathon business negotiation. They were both feeling a little bit ill at ease because they were not familiar with their surroundings, and they were concerned they might be targeted for violence since they obviously were not part of the local population.

All of a sudden they heard another set of footsteps walking behind them. Jim wheeled around to see who was following them, and as he did so the man behind them quickly placed his hand inside his coat in the area of his breast pocket. Fearing the worst, Jim wheeled back around and dashed out onto

the street in an attempt to get away from the gun he believed the man was pulling out. Boom! Jim got hit not by a speeding bullet, but by a speeding car.

The man who Jim had been frightened by ran toward him as he lay bleeding on the street and used the handkerchief he already had in his hand to stem the flow of Jim’s blood. It turned out that, luckily for Jim, the man was a doctor. Fairly soon the bleeding stopped. It appeared that Jim needed some stitches and a cast for his broken left leg, and after about 30 minutes an ambulance arrived to take Jim to the hospital.

Once Jim was on the stretcher and before being hoisted up into the ambulance he thanked the man for his help, and then asked, “Excuse me, but do you mind if I ask you what you were pulling out from under your coat when I first turned around to confront you?” “Why the very same handkerchief I used to stem the flow of your blood,” the doctor said. “I have been having my usual spring allergy response, and I was just ready to have a violent sneeze when you all of a sudden dashed out in the street and totally distracted me. My goodness, just now I am realizing that this is the first time today I have gone more than 10 minutes without sneezing!”

“Now please let me ask you a question,” the doctor said. “Why in the world did you jump out in the street immediately upon seeing me?” Jim quickly replied, “Well, we were in a dangerous neighborhood, and all of a

sudden out of nowhere you were following us, and it seemed clear that you were reaching for a gun or other weapon. How would you expect me to react?”

The doctor smiled and said “Well, my friend, it seems to me that you jumped to numerous inaccurate conclusions. First you thought that the neighborhood was dangerous when in fact it is one of the safest neighborhoods in our city, although most likely a much poorer neighborhood than where you come from. Since you thought you were in a dangerous place you were predisposed to something dangerous taking place. I am guessing the fact that it was late at night only added to your sense of fear.” “Yes” Jim said, “All of what you said is true.”

“And the fact that initially there was no one else walking on the street except for the two of you most likely made my footsteps sound much louder and more ominous. Is this not so?” Jim slowly nodded “Yes.”

“So” the doctor continued, “With those kinds of thoughts and fears running around in your head, when I stepped out of my house to go visit a patient you immediately thought that I was following you, although frankly I hadn’t even really noticed you, as I was beginning a build up to a big sneeze. The only thing that made sense to you in the frame of mind you were in was to believe that I was a criminal pulling out a weapon.” “I’m sorry,” Jim said. “No need to be sorry,” the doctor said. “You have not caused me

any harm. Indeed you have helped me to have a much clearer understanding of how my clients create stress for themselves."

The doctor paused for a moment and then said, "Let's imagine that you and your friend were walking down this very same street, but at 2:00 in the afternoon instead of late at night, and there were one or two people already walking in front of you, and one person already walking behind you at a comfortable distance. How do you think you would respond to my coming out of my house in such an instance?" "Hm," said Jim. "I might not have even noticed you!"

"And here is another idea," the doctor said. "What if everything initially happened just like it did this evening, but you had taken some self-defense training and felt confident in your ability to defend yourself, and also perhaps partly because of your training, you had the tendency to be both relaxed and aware. How do you think you would have responded then?" "I can't say for sure since I never had such training," Jim says, "But pretty much guaranteed at the very least I would not have jumped out in front of the car."

"And since you have been so kind so far," the doctor said, "One more thing if you don't mind. Your fear of being in dangerous surroundings led you to block out the only real danger that was present—a car speeding down the street. Perceiving danger all around you, you jumped in front of the only danger there was, and thus you created a self-fulfilling prophecy." "Yes," Jim said, "I feel quite humbled. This is a difficult way to learn a very important lesson. But better that I learned this lesson today rather than continuing to struggle for many years to come. Now I can truly understand what happens when one consistently jumps to conclusions without having all of the facts and assumes that something terrible will take place. Thank you for all of your assistance."

Does this story have any special relevance to you and how you sometimes react to what is going on around you? In any one circumstance there can be many possible responses and many possible outcomes. Have a different set of beliefs, and you will respond differently. Have a different set of capabilities and training, and you will respond differently. Change the way you use your body, and you will respond differently. Change the environment that you are in, and you will respond differently.

Stress is a particular emotional state. Emotion consists of language and body. Emotion is a system that is coherent at a deeper level than language or body taken separately. When your emotional state changes there is a concurrent change in your body, and in your use of language

(including your internal thought processes). When your emotions truly change, you will notice a change in the way you use your body and a change in the way you think about and describe your experience. When your emotions truly change you will feel better about who you are and what you are capable of. Greater self-awareness leads to a more relaxed and creative use of your entire system. When you feel better, you think better, and new solutions begin to become apparent. All of which leads to a greater likelihood that you will meet the challenges you face with great success.

(Source: Charlie Badenhop, the originator of Seishindo, is an instructor of Aikido and a long-term practitioner of self-relations therapy and Ericksonian hypnosis. www.seishindo.org)

If you don't know, then ask me. If you don't agree, then argue with me. If you don't like it, then say it to me. But don't keep silent and judge me.
—Unknown

WEB SITE PICKS

<http://www.acronymfinder.com/>

The Acronym Finder contains the Web's largest database of searchable acronyms and abbreviations (in languages including French, German, Swedish, Spanish, Portuguese, and others) covering just about every imaginable subject that lends itself to jargon. There's also a results refinement tool that lets you narrow down results for common acronyms by subject.

HEALTHY TIP

Beware of Contaminated Foods

Foods with the most pesticides include apples, bell peppers, celery, cherries, grapes, nectarines, peaches, pears, potatoes, red raspberries, spinach, and strawberries, and so, if possible, should be purchased only if organic. Among the least contaminated foods are asparagus, avocados, bananas, broccoli, cauliflower, sweet corn, kiwi, mangos, onions, papaya, pineapples, and sweet peas.

You can lower your pesticide intake by 90 percent by avoiding those top 12 most contaminated fruits and veggies. Eating these fruits and vegetables will expose a person to nearly 20 pesticides per day, on average. Eating the 12 least contaminated will expose a person to a fraction over 2 pesticides per day.

Nectarines have the highest percentage of pesticides among fruits, and celery the highest likelihood of multiple pesticides on a single vegetable. Avocados have the lowest chance of contamination.

Washing may reduce some pesticides, but when these foods were tested, they had all been thoroughly washed. Many pesticides are taken up internally in the plant.

Since the greatest value of most fruits and vegetables is in and just under the skin, peeling reduces nutrient value.

Many pesticides are now considered "endocrine disrupters" which affect your hormone balance and have been associated with breast and prostate cancer, fertility problems, and more.

(Sources: USDA Pesticide Data Program; *She's Gotta Have It*, B. Kamen. Excerpted by Betty Kamen, Ph.D., and Michael Rosenbaum, M.D., at <http://www.bettykamen.com>)

Mistakes are the portals of discovery.
—James Joyce

HUMOR

A young boy had just gotten his driving permit. He asked his father, who was a minister, if they could discuss his use of the family car.

His father took him into his study and said, "I'll make a deal with you. You bring your grades up, study the Bible a little, get your hair cut, and then we'll talk about it."

After about a month, the boy came back and again asked his father if they could discuss his use of the car.

They again went into the father's study where the father said, "Son, I've been very proud of you. You have brought your grades up, you've studied the Bible diligently, but you didn't get your hair cut."

The young man waited a moment and then replied, "You know, Dad, I've been thinking about that. You know Samson had long hair, Moses had long hair, Noah had long hair, and even Jesus had long hair."

The minister said, "Yes, and everywhere they went, they walked."

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A Walk Down Memory Lane

A little house with three bedrooms and one car on the street, a mower that you had to push to make the grass look neat.

In the kitchen on the wall we only had one phone, and no need for recording things—someone was always home.

We only had a living room where we would congregate, unless it was at mealtime in the kitchen where we ate.

We had no need for family rooms or extra rooms to dine; when meeting as a family those two rooms would work out fine.

We only had one TV set and channels maybe two, but always there was one of them with something worth the view.

For snacks we had potato chips that tasted like a chip, and if you wanted flavor there was Lawson's onion dip.

Store-bought snacks were rare because my mother liked to cook, and nothing can compare to snacks in Betty Crocker's Cookbook.

The snacks were even healthy with the best ingredients; there was no label with a hundred things that made no sense.

Weekends were for family trips or staying home to play; we all did things together even go to church to pray.

When we did our weekend trips depending on the weather, no one stayed at home because we liked to be together.

Sometimes we would separate to do things on our own, but we knew where the others were without our own cell phone.

Then there were the movies with your favorite movie star, and nothing can compare to watching movies in your car.

Then there were the picnics at the peak of summer season; pack a lunch and find some trees and never need a reason.

Get a baseball game together with the friends you know; have real action playing ball and no game video.

The doctor used to be the family friend, and didn't need insurance or a lawyer to defend the way that he took care of you or what he had to do, because he took an oath and strived to do the best for you.

Remember when we breathed the air it smelled so fresh and clean, and chemicals were not used on the grass to keep it green.

The milkman and the bread man used to go from door to door, and it was just a few cents more than going to the store.

There was a time when mailed letters came right to your door, without a lot of junk mail ads sent out by every store.

The mailman knew each house by name and knew where it was sent; there were not loads of mail addressed to present occupant.

Remember when the words "I do" meant that you really did, and not just temporally till someone blows their lid.

There was no thing as no one's fault; we just made a mistake.

There was a time when married life was built on give and take.

There was a time when just one glance was all that it would take, and you would know the kind of car, the model, and the make.

One time the music that you played whenever you would jive was from a vinyl, big-holed record called a 45.

The record player had a post to keep them all in line, and then the records would drop down and play one at a time.

Oh sure we had our problems then just like we do today, and always we were striving for a better way.

And every year that passed us by brought new and greater things; we now can even program phones with music or with rings.

Oh the simple life we lived still seems like so much fun; how can you explain a game, just kick the can and run.

And boys put baseball cards between bicycle spokes, and for a nickel red machines had little bottled cokes.

This life seemed so much easier and slower in some ways; I love the new technology but I sure miss those days.

So time moves on and so do we, and nothing stays the same, but I sure love to reminisce and walk down memory lane.

(Author Unknown)

INSPIRATION

The Gift

His parents acquired the Bendix washing machine when John Claypool was a small boy. It happened during World War II. His family owned no washing machine and, since gasoline was rationed, they could ill afford trips to the laundry several miles away. Keeping clothes clean became a problem for young John's household.

A family friend was drafted into the service, and his wife prepared to go with him. John's family offered to store their furniture while they were away. To the family's surprise, the friends suggested they use their Bendix while they were gone.

Young John helped with the washing, and across the years he developed an affection for the old, green Bendix. But eventually the war ended. Their friends returned. In the meantime he had forgotten how the machine came to be in their basement in the first place. When the friends came to take it away, John grew terribly upset. His mother, wise as she was, sat him down and said, "Wait a minute, son. You must remember that machine never belonged to us in the first place. That we ever got to use it at all was a gift. So, instead of being mad at it

being taken away, let's use this occasion to be grateful that we had it at all."

The lesson proved invaluable. Years later, John watched his 8-year-old daughter die a slow and painful death of leukemia. Though he struggled for months with her death, John could not begin healing from the loss until he remembered the old Bendix.

"I am here to testify," he said, "that when I remember that Laura Lou was a gift, pure and simple, something I neither earned nor deserved, nor had a right to, and when I remember that the appropriate response to a gift, even when it is taken away, is gratitude, then I am better able to try to say thank you that I was ever given her in the first place."

He could now begin healing from the tragedy of her loss by focusing instead on the wonder of her life. He started to see Laura Lou as a marvelous gift that he was fortunate enough to share for a time. He felt grateful. He found strength and healing. He knew he could get through the valley of loss.

When what you held dear can be viewed as a gift, a wonder that you had it at all, the memory can eventually become one more of gratitude than tragedy. And you will find the healing you need.

(Source: Steve Goodier.
www.lifesupportsystem.com)

WORK/LIFE

"Late Is Rude"

A resolution you might not have considered is making an effort to be on time. Late arrivals seem to have become a sign of the times. When asked why he was so diligent about being on time, the current President Bush said, "Late is rude." When you are late, you are telling the person who is waiting on you that you don't consider them important enough to get there on time. I'm assuming that most people would be there on time if the meeting was with their boss, a VIP, or a celebrity, but how many of us like to finish up that one last thing before we keep an appointment with our kids or our spouse? How many of us can make it to work on time, but are perpetually late for church, volunteer services, or even meetings with our friends? Do we pick up our kids late from activities causing the adult in charge to wait around on us? Don't tell me that your kids "understand" if you do this on a regular basis; those kids are thinking that you just don't care about them.

And when we are late, we aren't just sending a message to those we keep waiting, we are also creating more delays. How often have you been at a meeting where

someone had to cover material for a second time because someone showed up late? If you are late for an appointment, then that means the person with the appointment after you will be kept waiting as well. Do people joke with you about your habitual lateness? Do you really want that reputation?

Instead of arriving late intentionally, take something to do while you are waiting, whether a book to read, letter to write, or date book to review. If you are the one in charge of the events, do not put up with this type of behavior, it only makes it worse. If someone arrives at a meeting late and asks about something that has already been covered, then say, "I'm sorry, we covered that before you arrived, please see me after the meeting for the info." If you are waiting for someone at a restaurant, wait a short time, then go ahead and order. When they arrive, say, "Oh, I'm sorry, I wasn't sure if you were coming so I went ahead and ordered." If you run activities for kids and have to wait for parental pick-up, talk to the offender (preferably not around the kids so you don't embarrass them needlessly) the first time and remind them that you had to wait on THEM. The second time, send a letter home letting them know that in the future there will be a fine levied for every minute they are late and do it.

Obviously this article is directed at those who make a habit of being late, not those who are late due to circumstances beyond their control. Getting stuck in traffic or running late after an appointment once in a while is understandable, but if someone is late on a regular basis, then they just need to plan better to allow more time to get through the traffic or not schedule appointments so close to other responsibilities. By the way, people who work with President Bush, from the limo drivers to politicians, while some may differ with him on political issues, have all said how much they appreciate his promptness.

(Source: "Make a Note," *E-Zine*.)

FINANCES

10 Sneaky—and Fairly Painless—Ways to Build a Nest Egg

If your idea of creating an emergency fund involves scooping up the change that falls between the cushions, you could probably use a little extra green for the lean times. Rainy days are guaranteed. Rainy day funds aren't. So here are 10 virtually painless ways to put aside some money.

1. Start Your Stash

Get an envelope, cookie jar, coffee can, or whatever you like and set aside the same

amount every week. Whether it's \$5 or \$20, after a couple of weeks you're going to have a nice start on an emergency fund. The trick: don't count it, don't spend it, and remember to hide it where no one—including yourself—will be tempted.

2. Tip Yourself

You go to lunch and tip the waitress 15 to 20 percent. Put an equal amount aside for yourself, and your "tips" will add up quickly, says Gary Foreman, editor of The Dollar Stretcher, a Web site devoted to living better for less.

"It becomes part of your expenses over time," he says. "And you don't realize how quickly it adds up."

3. Live One Raise Behind

Rather than spending that 3 percent cost-of-living raise, bank it. And the next time you get a raise, increase your disposable income by the amount of your last raise.

"You're always one raise behind," says Foreman. "And it doesn't seem like you're depriving yourself compared to your co-workers or friends in a similar stage of life."

4. Get Cash Back

Feel virtuous when you refuse "cash back" from your debit card at the check out? Instead, take a small amount and slip it into your savings jar. At a buck here and there, you'll forget about it, but it will quickly grow into a nice emergency fund.

5. Become Your Own Bill Collector

Just paid off a big debt like a car loan or child's tuition? Keep making the payments—this time to yourself, suggests Barbara O'Neill, a professor of family and consumer sciences at Rutgers University.

This also works on a smaller scale. If you recently switched phone companies or discovered a flat-rate plan that's saving you money every month, put that cash aside in your savings jar.

6. Join Ye Olde Christmas Club

You don't even have to celebrate Christmas to enjoy the benefits of a Christmas club. On a regular basis you put a certain amount in an account for your future holiday cheer. Many clubs will draft an automatic deposit, and some job-affiliated plans come right out of your check, so you don't think about spending the money you never see.

7. Claim Your Discount

Do you use those shopping membership cards that print your "savings" at the bottom of your receipt? Even if you believe the cards are a gimmick, you can make the sys-

tem work for you. Set aside that money in your savings envelope, says Michelle Jones, editor of Betterbudgeting.com, a site that focuses on family money management. Jones estimates she saves an average of \$15 on each weekly grocery trip.

8. Love the IRS

Get a refund this year? You're in good company. Thanks to new tax laws, a lot of people will have a little extra money coming their way after April 15. Either put the check right in your savings account or cash it and stash it. You'll probably need it more later.

9. Reward Yourself

If you have the discipline to use a credit card and pay off the bill every month, use one that promises a cash reward and bank the money. Jones and her family used a card for groceries last year and recouped \$150, a nice windfall for anyone's rainy day fund.

10. Start a Change Jar

Chances are your parents or grandparents had one. The concept is simple: When you empty your pockets at the end of the night—or any time you clean out your purse—all the change goes into the jar. Not only will you feel about 5 pounds lighter, but your spare change adds up a lot faster than you think.

Turbo-charge it by adding at least one paper dollar a day to the pile, says O'Neill. That should add up to at least \$50 a month, she says. And who wouldn't want to have an extra \$600 padding in the savings account for a rainy day?

(Source: Dana Dratch, freelance writer based in Atlanta. www.Bankrate.com)

Questions/Comments to:

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An online version of this newsletter may be found at <http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/codecc/cc/navig-4.pdf>